

**Los Angeles Department of Public Health
First 5 LA Funded Childhood and Maternal Obesity Prevention Project**

Background:

- The obesity epidemic constitutes one of the most significant public health threats facing Los Angeles County, California, and the nation. Nearly one third of low-income, preschool-aged U.S. children are overweight or obese.
- While obesity rates in Los Angeles County's children appear to be leveling off or, in some cases, declining, there remain too many families with young children who are overweight or obese. From 2008 to 2009, the number of obese three year olds remained at 21 percent and at 22 percent for four year olds, according to a recent WIC study.
- In Los Angeles County, one in three women of reproductive age is overweight or obese, with a disproportionately higher number of Hispanic and African- American women being affected. Maternal overweight and obesity are linked to poor birth outcomes and lower breastfeeding rates.
- In LA County, the economic costs associated with overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity were \$11.9 billion in 2006, including \$6.0 billion in medical costs and \$5.9 billion in costs associated with lost productivity of working aged adults.

Project Details:

- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health received \$41 million from First 5 LA as a strategic partner to support the First 5 LA 2009-2015 Strategic Plan Goal: Children Maintain a Healthy Weight.
- The First 5 funded Obesity Prevention Project seeks to implement an intensive community-based public education and skills-building project to promote physical activity and healthy eating to the nearly one million children aged 0-to-5 and their families in LA County.
- The LA County Department of Public Health will work with a broad range of County and community partners to implement coordinated strategies that include interventions in: 1) child care environments; 2) community settings; and 3) interconception health care. Outcome objectives include:
 - Increasing the knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy of parents to adopt healthier habits through nutrition education, grocery store tours, cooking demonstrations, and social marketing.
 - Increasing the knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy among post-partum women to maintain a healthy weight through nutrition education classes, physical activity programming and social media messages.
 - Supporting parents to make healthier choices for their children when eating out by establishing a voluntary public recognition program to encourage restaurants to adopt and promote healthy menu items, including smaller portions and healthier default items on children's menus.
 - Increasing opportunities for discussion during routine office visits between health care providers and parents on improving nutrition and promoting physical activity and reducing screen time for children by establishing a case management protocol for health care providers (including community clinics, hospital-based clinics, multi-specialty group practices, and individual physicians).
 - Improving nutrition and physical activity practices in child care settings by providing education and establishing policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity.
 - Implementing a social marketing and public education campaign to promote healthy eating and discourage consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, a major contributor to the obesity epidemic.

More information about the First 5 LA funded Obesity Prevention Project will be available as details are finalized. For more information about Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention and Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health Programs, please visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>